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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/549,036	04/13/2000	Gregory A Farrell	MST-2322.1	7845

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09/06/2006

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EXAMINER

HANDY, DWAYNE K

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1743

DATE MAILED: 09/06/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/549,036

Applicant(s)

FARRELL, GREGORY A

Examiner

Dwayne K. Handy

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 July 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 23-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 23-29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. Claim 27 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Applicant has claimed a magnetic detection means in claim 27. Since no elements of this system were ever described in the specification, however, one skilled in the art could be enabled to make and/or use the invention. The Examiner notes that Applicant has added the term "magnetic means" to the Specification. Applicant has not, however, actually described or shown the magnetic means in the Specification or Figures. Applicant has only stated that the magnetic means may be used. It appears that Applicant has only described or shown the optical means.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148

USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

4. Claims 23, 24, 26, 28 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bezanson (5,106,187) in view of Sklar et al. (5,895,764).

5. Claims 25 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bezanson (5,106,187) in view of Sklar et al. (5,895,764), and further in view of Yamamoto (5,488,469).

These rejections were made in the previous Office Action (mailed 6/1/05). They remain in effect. Please see Response to Arguments below.

Response to Arguments

6. Applicant's arguments filed 7/27/05 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant has amended claim 23 to recites a particle counting means. Applicant has also argued the following in traversing the rejection under Bezason and

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Sklar: Neither Bezanson nor Sklar disclose a means for improving the precision in counting particles.

Particle counting means

7. As noted by the Examiner above, claim 23 now recites a particle counting means. As opposed to a detection means. This is an intended use of the detector – particle counting – and does not confer any additional structural feature to the detector. The Examiner reminds Applicant that a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim.

Improving precision

8. Applicant has also argued that Bezanson does not disclose nor suggest “means for improving the precision in counting the number of particles or cells in a given volume of test sample (page 8, lines 11-13 and 16-17; page 9, lines 2-8 and lines 15-19; and page 10, lines 7-9). The Examiner submits that Applicant has basically claimed a method of optimization. The method recites the basic steps of (a) delivering the sheath stream at a first rate, (b) counting the particles, (c) comparing the initial count to a standard or reference, (c) and then adjusting the flow rate. This is what the combined references Bezanson and Sklar teach. Applicant has argued that the term “thereby improving the precision of the particle counting means in counting the number of cells in

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the test sample” distinguishes the claim over the prior art. The Examiner asks “improves the precision of the particle counting means” with respect to what? The initial count of step (b)? The Examiner submits that if this is the case, then **any** method that adjusts the flow rate in response to an initial reading that is compared to a reference value will inherently “improve the precision of the counting means”. This is certainly met by the combination of Bezanson and Sklar.

If, on the other hand, Applicant is arguing that the particular method or device “improves the precision of the particle counting means” with respect to the prior art devices, then applicant should detail exactly what features of the combined elements or method steps provide this improvement in precision. Since Applicant has not provided evidence of this assertion, then these arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references.

In both cases, the term/argument “thereby improving the precision of the particle counting means” being argued by Applicant is mere assertion unless Applicant can provide evidence that the method or combination of elements in the method provide the improvement over the prior art.

Conclusion

9. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Dwayne K. Handy whose telephone number is (571)-272-1259. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jill Warden can be reached on (571)-272-1267. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

DKH
September 4, 2006


Jill Warden
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Technology Center 1700